



The Bethel Courier.

Volume IV—Number 1

DECEMBER 1979

Bethel Historical Society



Bethel Public Library, c. 1900

THE BETHEL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION 1879-1979

In 1899 when The Bethel Library Association was twenty years old Miss Annie Frye, who had been Secretary of the Association since 1880, set down notes on its origin. She wrote that in the winter of 1878-1879 a number of ladies in Bethel who had been borrowing books from the Mercantile Library in Portland became discouraged by the difficulties of having to send back and forth such a distance for books. After discussion of various alternatives, gradually the idea began to grow of starting a library in Bethel. Despite some indifference the desire became firmly held; in the spring of 1879 the Library Association came into being.

As was the accepted practice in Bethel one hundred years ago, the ladies consulted Dr. Nathaniel True, "to whom," said Miss Frye, "Bethel is greatly indebted for many public enterprises and whose voice was ever raised in the cause of higher education." The ladies thought that if Dr. True would give a series of lectures in ancient history, money could be raised by charging for the lectures and at the same time stimulate interest in the new project. Dr. True amended their proposal to include lectures by others. On March 18, 1879 Mr. W. E. Skillings began with a lecture, including pictures, entitled "Reminiscences of Rome." The "Oxford Democrat" was somewhat amused at the ladies' "latest" idea. It described the lectures as a great success, enabling people who could not afford to go to Rome the opportunity to know what the eternal city

was like. Other lectures followed, given by Dr. True, the Reverend A. Bosserman (the Universalist minister), and the Honorable David Hammond, a former U. S. Congressman. A little over \$100 was realized from the lectures and the concert which concluded the series.

The actual organization of the Library Association took place on April 14, 1879 at a meeting at The Bethel House. A sizable number of prominent local citizens met and elected the following officers:

President: Miss Annie Cross
Vice-President: Mrs. Ceylon Rowe
Secretary: Mrs. S. F. Gibson
Treasurer: Mrs. W. O. Straw

A week later the first Trustees were chosen: Mrs. David Hammons, Miss Phoebe Buxton, Dr. True, Mr. Bosserman, and Mr. W. E. Skillings. Although the initial list of officers was dominated by women's names, in practice from the beginning both men and women have been involved in the management of the Library. A Constitution was drafted by a Committee headed by Dr. True. Both the Constitution and a set of by-laws were quickly adopted. The stated purpose of the Association in the preamble to the first Constitution was "to increase the general intelligence and literary taste of the community." On June 14, 1879 the Library opened, from 3 to 5 and 7 to 8 on Saturday afternoon and evening. It has been open on a regular basis ever since. The exact location is not given, but from other evidence it appears that it may have been the

Rowe Block where the firehouse is today.

The Library was a subscription library, a private association for the benefit of its members. There were about 100 members, and this number remained virtually constant during the period of subscription membership. The dues were \$1 for the first year, \$.50 renewal fee annually. Non-members from Bethel could borrow books at \$.05 a book, and "strangers in town" could also borrow books at the \$.05 fee but had to make a deposit returnable on their departure equal to the value of a book. Only one book could be taken out at a time, and there was a time limit of two weeks maximum.

The initial supply of books came as gifts from private libraries with others bought from the proceeds from the lecture series. 79 books were given; 140 were bought the first year. In years following about 75 books were added annually. In one of her earliest minutes, the winter of 1880, Miss Frye, who had soon succeeded Mrs. Gibson as Secretary, notes that the Trustees had been to the Library Room to check on books just arrived; 30 books had been purchased for \$49.67, and she writes that the Trustees had a happy afternoon looking over their new treasures.

Mrs. Straw seems to have served as the first librarian on a non-paid basis—she is the first mentioned by name, but the early librarians do not figure much in the minutes. Practical problems of ordering, listing, marking, and arranging books were all done by the Trustees. Librarians even changed frequently. The pay in 1881 was \$16 a year. The names which occur most often are Miss Annie Cross, Miss Emma Roberts, Miss Nora Burbank, Miss Alice Chapman. Mrs. Straw seems to have filled in often for long periods.

The impressions derived from minutes of the Library's first years are of both success and struggle. The success was early and clear—people were hungry for books, and the subscribers who came often to borrow books were eager to submit lists of books to be considered. The struggle was to earn money. One hundred subscribers at \$.50 each annually would not bring a large sum, and the amounts earned from non-member borrowing were very small. More than books had to be taken care of. Mr. Gibson had donated the first bookcase, but others were soon needed. Wood must be bought; a lamp and oil were needed as well as notebooks and stationery for the Trustees' use and paste and paper to cover books. There was need for a catalogue and lists of subscribers to be printed. Finally, of importance was rent; in early 1880 the Library was moved to Miss Burnham's front room (perhaps now the location of Gordon Gillies' law office or in the "Rowe Block") for which she charged \$18 a year. (Later, with some irritation, it seems, the rent was reduced to \$15 a year because Miss Burnham insisted on using the room herself in hot weather.)

The solution to those pressing needs was to work to earn money. In the annals of Bethel organizations no endeavors were more heroic than those of the early supporters of the Library. For the first thirty years of the Library Association's existence the records show a steady stream of suppers, concerts, entertainments (such as tableaux), lectures, card parties and game parties, rose breakfasts (including cold ham, hot bran muffins, coffee, eggs to order, and doughnuts for \$.25), silver teas,

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socials, the annual Town Meeting Day dinner, and ice cream and cake in summer afternoons. All of these efforts were in the local tradition, but the Library group was particularly dedicated, with the desire for books an ever-present incentive. The Town Meeting Day dinner was given until World War I and was a steady money earner; baked beans, brown bread, chopped cabbage, pie, and coffee for \$.25, at first held in Rialto Hall on Lower Main Street, then moved to Pattee's Hall—the old Grange Hall torn down in 1978. One of the outstanding entertainments was a lecture by Jane Addams of Hull House fame, who was visiting in Bethel in 1912. It was a great success for awhile, and the library earned over \$100.

The women did most of this work, but there were always men pressed into various forms of service, and both men and women served in almost equal numbers on the Trustees. In addition to such manual labor as moving bookcases, etc. in the early years, Dr. Tuell and Mr. A. Valentine took care of getting the wood and tending the furnace (a cord of slabs was paid for by a Library membership). Beginning in the early part of the twentieth century until his death in 1934 Henry Hastings Sr. shovelled the walks and stoked the furnace as an unpaid service to the Library. In addition, the men tended to the higher problems of financial management: Mr. Herrick and, years later, Mr. Park, always saw to the insurance and banking. In 1886 the Town gave the Library \$50 after Mr. Valentine had spoken to the Town Fathers. Occasionally, but not regularly, the town made other small contributions in the late 1880's and 1890's.

By 1884 the Library was established on Church St. in Mr. Wiley's building (now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Myers) where it remained for fifteen years. By 1883 it boasted 516 books.

What could the subscribers borrow for their \$.50 annually in the 1880's? To judge from the early lists, laboriously and meticulously assembled by hand, the Library had made a good start. There was a very respectable collection of history books with works from all the great and popular 19th century historians such as Parkman, Motley, and Bancroft. There were numerous biographies, including such classics as Grant's Memoirs and many of English statesmen also. For poetry one had the complete works of Shakespeare and such others as Tennyson, Longfellow, and Byron. Travel, religion and essays were other non-fiction categories. Fiction was the most popular with a good choice. The Trustees had bought in 1883, with much excitement, a complete set of Dickens; and in addition, there were novels by Trollope, Scott, Thackeray, George Eliot, and the Bronte sisters to mention only those 19th century English novelists still read today. Louisa May Alcott ("Little Women"), Henry James, Bret Harte, and Mark Twain were there. Victor Hugo and Tolstoy, including Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina," were in translation. Even detective stories were represented with "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes." (All of the Sherlock Holmes stories seem to have been bought as soon as they appeared). One of the pleasant thoughts about the Library is to contemplate the hours of pleasure which its contents have given over the years.

In 1891 Mr. O. H. Mason, a prominent local merchant, gave the Library \$100, the beginning of the

Library's endowment. Miss Frye noted this gift with great pleasure as an omen for the future. She was right. An even more favorable development came at the end of the 1890's when the Library finally found a permanent home. In 1884 Mr. Wiley had sold his Church St. building to Robert Farwell—many readers will remember when this building was Farwell and Wight's—and Mr. Farwell began to press to have the Library moved. In 1899 the Library moved to its present location, on the property of Mr. and Mrs. W. O. Straw; the building was the former law office of Enoch Foster, which had been moved in 1881 by oxen from Lower Main St. (the present home of Grace Merrill). "The rooms were very nicely fitted up," said Miss Frye. This building is the present stack section of the Library.

Clearly by 1899 the Library had turned a corner although years of hard work lay ahead. Miss Frye's minutes for 1899 reflect the Trustees' satisfaction. "Twenty years ago," she says, "all sorts of predictions were in order as to the future of this Association. Tonight, it has over 2,000 volumes and is comfortably established in a building all by itself with space enough to shelve many hundred books. . . ." To see how happy the Trustees were with so little should make us reflect on how hard the struggle had been. "At the meeting," wrote Miss Frye a bit later, "we could only smile at each other. With \$68.10 in the Treasury and a note for \$100 we felt quite rich."

From now on along with reports of card parties, ice cream and cake sales at the Library (four freezers not enough for one afternoon Miss Frye notes) by which these hard-working women continued to serve the Library are increasing reports of gifts. The first years of the twentieth century were a period of steady growth. In 1904, Mr. and Mrs. continued on Page Four

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

—PROGRAMS 1980

January 3—Film "Basketmaking"

February 7—"Views of Bygone Bethel", Slide Presentation, Ralph Hall.

March 6—"So You Think You Know Bethel".

April 3—"History of the Bethel Fire Department".

May 1—"Views of Greenwood's Past", Slide Presentation, Blaine Mills, Greenwood Historical Society.

June 5—"The Irish Neighborhood".

July 3—"Glimpses of East Bethel Through the Years", Slide Presentation, Alder River Grange Hall, East Bethel. Picnic at 6 p. m.

August 7—Dr. Richard Michael Gramly, Me. State Museum, "Pre-Historic Indian Archaeological Sites on the Upper Androscoggin".

September 4—Annual Meeting, Pot Luck Supper beginning at 6:30 p. m.

October 2—Annual "What's It" Meeting.

November 6—"Bethel During World War II", Stanley Howe, Director, Bethel Historical Society.

December 4—Annual Christmas Meeting.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

I am delighted with the response by members and friends of the Society to the Endowment Fund campaign since its inauguration last July. Over \$600 has been raised to date, which is most encouraging. This is an on-going effort on the Society's part, and I wish to thank the donors who have given the campaign such a good start and to urge other members and friends to participate.

The past year has seen an increase in the use of the meeting room and other facilities for special conferences and meetings. This source of income is important to the Society, and I hope that such joint promotional efforts with the Bethel Inn and the Greater Bethel Chamber of Commerce, for example, in encouraging further use of the Society's fine facilities will meet with success.

This newsletter provides some idea of the Society's activities over the past few months and plans for a busy year to come. On behalf of the organization, I encourage you to join in some of these activities if you are not yet involved. Also if you have ideas for other programs and projects, do not hesitate to bring them to my attention or to the Director's.

Catherine Newell

SOCIETY HOSTS ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MAINE CITIZENS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

On October 13, the Society hosted the annual meeting of Maine Citizens for Historic Preservation. Officers for the ensuing year and various reports were received. Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Director of the Maine Historic Preservation Committee, reported several new developments in preservation legislation enacted by the recent session of the Maine Legislature. A buffet luncheon was served by members of the Special Projects Committee. Society Director Stanley Howe presented a slide lecture on "Broad Street Through the Years," and then those attending enjoyed a walking tour of the street with commentary by Howe and Earle Shettleworth.

SOCIETY OFFERS MAINE HISTORY COURSE

The Society sponsored a course in Maine History for the first time this autumn with eighteen students from Bethel and surrounding towns. The course consisting of seven lectures by Society Director Stanley Howe and a field trip to some of Maine's most significant nearby sites including historic Paris Hill, Poland Spring, and the Shaker Museum at New Gloucester, will again be offered in the near future.

EDITOR'S CORNER

The response to the last "Courier" was most enthusiastic, especially to the article on ferries. Comment is still being received on the Main Street article in the December, 1978 "Courier." Society member Albert Brown tells me that it was not Charles Brown but his father Harry Brown, brother of Charles, who had the barber shop on site 13. The article has also resulted in some very fine old photographs of Main Street sites for which the Society is grateful. — S. R. H.

Ceylon Rowe gave \$25, for example, apparently spontaneously. Mr. Joseph Rich, a visitor who came every summer to his home by Songo Pond in 1908, gave cases and cards for a card catalogue. A good sum, not specified, was given by friends of Miss Fanny Philbrook in her memory. The most sizeable gift was \$500. in 1908 from Mr. William Hastings (son of Major Gideon Hastings and a cousin of Mrs. Straw). Every year Mrs. Herrick, by now the Secretary of the Association and a leader in the Library for fifty years, gave a good number of books. In 1911 Mr. Rich gave as a memorial to his wife 150 books, a new book case, and a pledge of 50 books a year until his death. I well remember in my early reading years the large number of books with a bookplate indicating that they were a gift from Mr. Rich.

Increasingly Mrs. Herrick's minutes reflect her efforts to get the Trustees out of the minutiae of operations and to put more emphasis on the Librarian's job. In 1911 came a change of some importance. Miss Maud Thurston (aunt of Rosalie Wight and Murray Thurston) was named Librarian at \$50 a year. She was younger than the previous incumbents, very capable and much respected, and the Trustees were delighted. She served as Librarian until 1927 to be succeeded by Miss Annie Hamlin (1927-38), Mrs. H. Merton Farwell (1938-53), Mrs. John Howe (1953-57), Mrs. Philip Chadbourne (1957-72), and the present Librarian, Mrs. Robert Keniston.

In 1912 the Library took the most important decision since its foundation. It was voted to ask the Town for a subsidy of \$300 a year on condition that the Library become a completely free library. There is no indication in the Minutes of the prime mover in this decision, but probably a combination of circumstances was responsible. The trend of the times was for free libraries, spurred by Andrew Carnegie, who had been working in that direction for more than thirty years; also, it was clear that the Library needed a stable underpinning of financial support, despite the efforts and generosity of its devoted supporters; and, finally, the demand on the part of the public for opportunities for more reading must have been clear. In any event, the Library became open to all, and the Constitution was appropriately amended.

A new era had begun. Immediately circulation of books rose markedly. From now on the use of the Library by children became of first importance. When it cost 5c to borrow a book, few children could come, and the early records show little attention to their needs beyond the purchase of "Little Women" and "A Child's History of England." Now, however, with many children eagerly coming to the Library, Mrs. Herrick records the Trustees' urgent and excited recognition of a new responsibility.

The Town's support has been continuous since 1912 although a large part of the Library's income to this day comes from past gifts, and Mrs. Chadbourne always donated her services. The Town's share has remained proportionately lower than that contributed by other Towns comparable to Bethel. The great gift which gave the Library a degree of stability, even more than that provided by the Town, came from Mrs. Straw, one of the Library's

founders and faithful supporters for more than forty years. In 1923 her lawyer and cousin Henry Hastings informed the Trustees that Mrs. Straw had left the Library \$10,000 in her Will, along with the Library building, the land on which it stood, and the right of way around the property. In 1923, \$10,000, a generous gift at any time, was a splendid sum, and Mrs. Straw deserves the thanks of every reader. A woman of high standards and keen intellectual interests, she was from a local family (the Hastings family) and along with Mrs. Herrick deserves recognition as their leader who kept the Library in the forefront of Bethel's cultural scene.

In 1937 the present front part of the Library was built, mainly from gifts and accumulations from past endowments. The architect was John Calvin Stevens, the best known architect in Maine. The builder was John Burbank, who built the entire building for under \$5,000 on a cost basis.

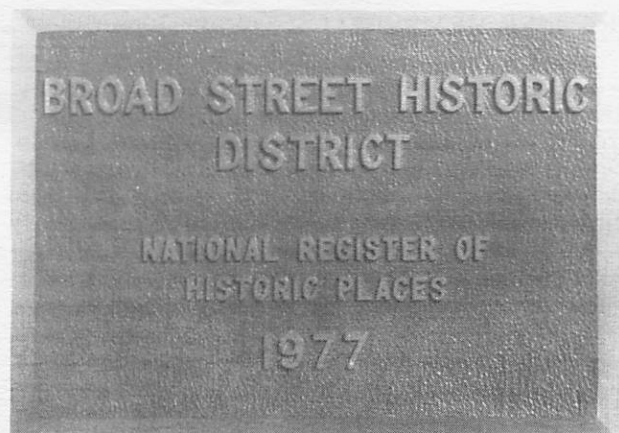
With constantly increasing use by the early 1960's the new building, which had seemed so large in 1937, was again crowded and new needs were pressing; attempts to raise money to provide additional space finally resulted in 1978-79 in the renovation of the second floor to provide a fine new room and additional space for storage, thus making the entire building really usable. In the meantime, the Library had gained additional land, first through the generosity of Mr. Guy Butler, owner of the Inn in 1963, and secondly, as a result of arrangements made when Gould Academy sold the Inn in 1976, giving land at the rear of the Library building.

The great endowments from the past to the Library have not been in money or in property, however, but derived from the determination, ideals, and local pride of the Library's founders and early supporters. We owe them gratitude and respect. Equally important has been the public's recognition of what the Library has to offer. From the very beginning the Library's services have been in demand, and this demand has never flagged, giving a constant incentive to those who were willing to work to provide the books so eagerly wanted. The Minutes of the Library's formative years may record fatigue on occasion but never discouragement or a slackening of the desire to serve their users. The goal of "raising the general level of intelligence in Bethel" set forth in the first Constitution, and ever present in Mrs. Herrick's thinking, can best be met by giving children the means of broadening their horizons and expanding their interests. Certainly in this respect the Library has made a major contribution.

Finally, it was basically a Bethel accomplishment, although recognition is cheerfully made to the help given by some of the visitors who have come to love Bethel over the years. Both the early Library Trustees and the list of borrowers over the years are almost a roll call of Bethel names familiar to us all. They built well—better than they knew, perhaps—and we can be both grateful and proud.

COMMITTEES APPOINTED FOR 1979-80

Following the annual meeting the trustees appointed the following to the standing committees of the Society: Building, Donald Eddy, Chairman, E. M. Quinn, Julia Brown, Richard Verville; Gar-



The Broad Street Historic District Marker was recently placed on the residence of Society Life Member Annie Hastings at the beginning of Broad Street.

dens and Grounds, Sudie Vachon, Chairwoman, Clare Smith, Gertrude Hutchins, Hazel Wheeler, Donald Bennett, Arthur Cummings, Margaret Tibbetts, Jane Vogt; Education and Research, Clare Smith, Catherine Newell, Rosalind Chapman, Elizabeth Smith, Virginia Kelly, Judith Haskell, Nancy Bentley, George Allen, Sue Wight, Kurt Brown, Randall Bennett, Alvin Barth, Mary Valentine; Membership, E. M. Quinn, Chairman, Marge Noll, Mary Valentine, Barbara D. Brown; Program, Geraldine Howe, Chairwoman, Edith Eypper, Helen Morton, Richard Fraser, Jean Ness, Karen Brown; Museum, Judith Haskell, Marge Noll, Co-Chairwomen, Floribel Haines, Agnes Haines, Richard Fraser, Carol Gersen, Frances Harding, Nell Valentine, Margaret Davis, Rosalind Chapman, Barbara H. Brown; Investment, Margaret Tibbetts, Chairman, Edmond Vachon, Royden Keddy, Donald Bennett, James Alger, Louise Lincoln, ex officio, Catherine Newell, Stanley Howe; Special Projects, Carolyn Brooks, Chairwoman, Sarah Stevens, Marguerite Quinn, Pearlina McMillin, Persis Post, Sylvia Wight, Julia Brown, Edna York; Genealogical, Alden Kennett, Chairman, Mabel Kennett, Floribel Haines, Agnes Haines, Judith Barker, Gloria Snyder, Jean Ness.

BOOK REVIEW

HISTORY OF HEBRON ACADEMY: 1804-1972

By Harold E. Hall: Published by the Trustees of Hebron Academy

Nestled among the higher elevations of the Oxford Hills, Hebron Academy certainly looks as if it would engender an interesting history. And a review of a list of its graduates would seem as well to foster a good number of anecdotes. Surely all of those senators, vice presidents, governors and assorted notables have a few lines scribbled somewhere that could be woven into an engaging tale! Probably, but not yet told.

Or maybe it's just that I have a spectator's appreciation for histories. Possibly I have been convinced that it takes floods, wars, holocausts, and intricate schemes of treason to really make a history.

In any case, Mr. Hall's "History" does tell much of Hebron.

The Town was settled by families sent there as colonists by Alexander Shepard, Jr., who had been awarded much of Oxford County in exchange for his labors in mapping the region known as Maine. Among the early settlers was a William Burrows, Veteran of the Revolution. As deacon of the local Church, he led the effort to establish the Academy. The father of Hannibal Hamlin also was a founder.

"1805, Tuesday, September 3 Agreeable to the request of the Trustees, I commenced the school in the Academy, about 25 scholars."

So wrote the first headmaster. A modest tone to be sure.

And Hebron has made steady progress since, except for very minor setbacks (the "spectator" sort of trauma for the most part, i. e. a few wars, depression, a big fire and trying to do without female students). The tuition is no longer \$3.50 for a full term, and the faculty salaries have climbed from \$400.00 per year.

During one of the setbacks, I forget which one, several members of the faculty were given summer employment recruiting students. They were paid a bounty of \$25.00 for each student they enrolled. Now the school turns some applicants away.

The "History" will be for some student a great resource. Whole chapters devoted to naming faculty members and subjects they taught. Other chapters list trustees or buildings purchased.

The "History" is written in a style that is duplicative of the message in an advertisement that the Academy once published, to wit: "Hebron has no hotels or saloons." If you need to know just who was responsible for the plaster repairs done to the old chapel, then search no further.

The reader should keep in mind just how Yankee the entire enterprise is. The reader should dwell for a moment on the tone of teacher and coach Charles C. Dwyer's words of 1932:

"Comparisons are continually being made regarding present athletes and those of a few decades ago. . . our earlier teams had a decided advantage in that we played in fewer competitive sports, and so larger numbers came out to try for the teams. . . In the early days when a game had to be played at Bridgton Academy, the boys would get up at five o'clock, eat breakfast, take a stage drawn by a pair of horses and arrive at lunch time if the wheels did not run dry of grease or a tug break. . . Whether or not athletes are better today may be a matter of opinion, but we will all agree that the roads are better and the auto is an improvement over the horse." p. 125.

The "History," for all its detail and all of the fine research it represents, misses one significant event, however. An event that took place over and over and over. It consisted of a pronouncement made by the Headmaster to whatever student or parent happened to be listening:

"If you work hard at Hebron and produce to your maximum you are guaranteed admission to the college of your choice." Period.

"History" of Hebron Academy is dedicated to those who have Hebron in their hearts.

Gordon M. Gillies '62

ANNUAL MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 6

The Annual Meeting of the Society was held on September 6 with the traditional pot luck supper. The report of the Nominating Committee, consisting of Judith Haskell, Chairwoman, Betty Perkins and Willard Wight, presented the following slate for approval by the membership: President, Catherine Newell; Vice President, Donald Bennett; Secretary, Edith Eddy; Treasurer, E. Louise Lincoln; Trustee for 3 years, Margaret Tibbetts. It was voted to accept this report. Special recognition was given to Margaret Tibbetts, retiring as Treasurer, and Pearlina McMillin, retiring as Trustee, for their many contributions to the success of the Society.

In her review of the past year, President Catherine Newell cited the following developments and accomplishments: "Outside In" exhibit placed on display at both Telstar Regional High School and Gould Academy viewed by several hundred persons as part of the Society's outreach program; a very successful "History of Bethel" course offered to the public for the first time; a profitable 1979 calendar sold for the first time; seven new life members added to the rolls; a popular slides program "Gould Through the Years" presented at Alumni Weekend; a highly successful Heritage Day held in February during Winter Carnival; the announcement of a \$250,000 endowment from the William Bingham II Trust for Charity and the receipt of the first \$50,000 installment; the visitation of the museum by nearly 500 students; the hosting of a regional workshop sponsored by the Maine State Museum on Fund Raising; forty-four individuals or organizations made donations to the Society's collection; a matching grant was received from the Maine Publicity Bureau to fund a new brochure; the appearance of an article on the museum "The House That Moses Built" by Randall Bennett in June, 1979 issue of "Downeast"; the award of the Dr. Moses Mason Award to Timothy Kersey for his essay on local history; a successful and generally well-attended summer film and lecture series; a very successful art exhibit featuring the work of John J. Enneking who spent time in North Newry; the milestone of reaching 300 members; the publication of the 1980 calendar and the Historical Society cook book.

Following the annual meeting, Margaret Joy Tibbetts was re-elected Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Catherine Newell, Vice-Chairman, Edith Eddy, Clerk.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

E. Louise Lincoln, Treasurer

Born in Buffalo, New York, E. Louise Lincoln was graduated from West Philadelphia High School in 1932. The widow of Arthur Lincoln, she has three children and eight grandchildren. Mrs. Lincoln was a member of the Maine House of Representatives from 1961 to 1972 and Clerk of the Maine House 1974-75. She is a Trustee of the Maine Publicity Bureau, Bethel Library Association, and Bethel Savings Bank. Active in community affairs including service as Secretary of the Bethel Chamber of Commerce, she is also president of LEW Corporation. She has been the Society's bookkeeper since 1978.

6 NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon M. Gillies of Broad Street, Bethel, are the newest life members of the Society. Mr. and Mrs. Gillies own the brick block in the Broad Street Historic District built by Robert Chapman in 1859. Mr. Gillies practices law and is assisted by his wife. The addition of the Gillies brings to thirty-seven the number of life members currently in the Society.

SOCIETY FEATURES ENNEKING EXHIBIT

Through the efforts of Vice President Donald Bennett, the Moses Mason Museum featured an exhibit of paintings and other historical materials associated with the American impressionist John J. Enneking (1841-1916). The Enneking paintings in this exhibition are part of a private collection of the late J. Howell Crosby of Arlington, Massachusetts and Sunday River, Newry, on loan to the Museum by Vice President Bennett and his aunt, Society life member Ruth Crosby, a summer resident of Sunday River.

The Sunday River covered bridge, now one of ten in Maine acquired the name "Artist's Bridge" because of Enneking's frequent sketching visits there of the bridge and its valley setting. In the 1880's, Enneking, a Boston resident, reportedly owned a camp in North Newry which he used as a base for his sketching expeditions into the White Mountains and the nearby surroundings. Enneking is also known to have visited the Bethel-Newry area earlier in his career, staying at the Locke Mountain House in North Bethel, which was the subject of a book by Miss Crosby ("I Was A Summer Boarder") in 1966.

Although Enneking studied with and was influenced by the French impressionists, he developed his own distinctive style and methods of painting which established him as a major regional impressionist artist.

OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES—

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1966 TO PRESENT

President: Charles Heywood, 1966-68; Dale Thurston, 1968-69; John T. Grover, 1969-72; E. M. Quinn, 1972-73; Barbara H. Merrill, 1973; Margaret Joy Tibbetts, 1973-76; John J. Willard, Jr., 1976-78; Catherine Newell, 1978-

Vice President: Dale Thurston, 1966-68; E. M. Quinn, 1969-72; Margaret J. Tibbetts, 1973; John J. Willard, Jr., 1973-76; Catherine Newell, 1976-78; Donald G. Bennett, 1978-

Secretary: Eva M. Bean, 1966-69; Christine Grover, 1969-74; Maxine Brown, 1974-75; Judith Haskell, 1975-78; Edith Eaton Eddy, 1978-

Treasurer: Faye Taylor, 1966-1971; Robert B. Marshall, 1971-72; Gwendolyn G. Holt, 1972-74; Pearlina McMillin, 1974-76; Margaret Joy Tibbetts, 1976-79; E. Louise Lincoln, 1979-

Trustees: Elizabeth Mason Carter, 1970-73; Nell Valentine, 1970-72; Norman O. Mills, 1970-72; John T. Grover, 1972-75; Rosalind R. Chapman, 1972-74; E. M. Quinn, 1973-76; Floribel Haines, 1974-77; Donald B. Eddy, 1975-78; Pearlina McMillin, 1976-79; Suzanne Fiske, 1977-; Judith E. Haskell, 1978-; Margaret Joy Tibbetts, 1979-

SOCIETY HONORS GUIDES FOR 1979 SEASON

Volunteers who assisted with operations of the Moses Mason Museum during the 1979 season were honored at a boiled dinner reception sponsored by the Museum Committee on October 19. Museum Co-Chairwoman Judith Haskell and Society Director Stanley Howe thanked those present for their many contributions. Marge Noll, who did much of the organizing, and Barbara H. Brown for her weekly flower arrangements were specifically cited. Attending were Beatrice Conrad, Ruth Ames, Persis Post, Gertrude Hutchins, Maxine Brown, Margaret Tibbetts, Amy Davis, Frances Harding, Helen Morton, Carol Gersen, Karen Bean, Carolyn Brooks, Julia Brown, Larry Billings, Barbara H. Brown, Mary Valentine, Edith Eddy, Edna York, Nell Valentine, Rosalind Chapman, Floribel Haines, Agnes Haines, Judith Haskell and Stanley Howe. Also assisting this year but unable to attend were Ernestine Jackson, Mary Lou Cole, Geraldine Howe, Elizabeth Bane, Mary Smith and Carol Fiske.

NEARLY \$600 RAISED FOR ENDOWMENT

In response to President Catherine Newell's request that was enclosed in the last issue of the "Courier" for funds to enlarge the endowment of the Society in order to offset the effects of inflation, eight donations have so far been received bringing the total to \$570. The following have made donations to date: Donald Brown, Isabel Coburn, Mr. and Mrs. James Hutchins, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Cole, Margaret Herrick Oakes, Bethel Auto Sales, Margaret Joy Tibbetts, Mr. and Mrs. Donald G. Bennett.

Donations are welcome at any time and in any amount. These funds will be permanently established in the endowment account. All gifts are tax deductible and may be sent to: Endowment Fund, Bethel Historical Society, P. O. Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217. Please make checks payable to the Bethel Historical Society, Inc.

OVER 1,200 VISIT MUSEUM DURING 1979

Over 1,200 persons visited the Moses Mason Museum during 1979. Nearly half were students from area schools, and others were visitors during special events such as Heritage Day in February. Visitors came from thirty-eight states, the District of Columbia, and four foreign nations.

7 OUR READERS WRITE

"The 'Bethel Courier' is a fine newsletter and always of interest. The article on ferry boats is nostalgic. I remember a crossing on West Bethel ferry with Ira Hickford as pilot. He was a small man, no more than five feet, very keen and well-spoken. When that job folded, he sold nursery stock. He was an excellent gardener.

"Dr. Tibbetts often used the Bean-Bartlett ferry. One time Eva Bean and I were selling tickets, for something, perhaps the Chataqua, and we hopped on the Hanover ferry to save mileage."

Pearl Ashby Tibbetts

Main Street Notes

"All my childhood pictures and all of my friends were taken at the Vandekerckhoven Photography Studio on Main Street. The two Van families (Alphonse and Eugene) occupied prominent places in Bethel activities for many years. Grace and Lucia's mother Emma Jones Van Den Kerckhoven was a real lady, an authority on antiques with an extensive collection of dolls."

Elizabeth Mason Carter

IN MEMORIAM

Carroll E. Valentine, died July 19, 1979. A life member of the Society, he had been a member since the Society's founding in 1966. A dedicated and loyal member, Mr. Valentine served the Society in many capacities as incorporator and as chairman of the Nominating Committee for several years. He also was very active during 1974 in assisting with the establishment of the Moses Mason Museum.

Louis Van Den Kerckhoven died August 4, 1979. Mr. Van Den Kerckhoven had been a member of the Society since its founding in 1966.

Ruth B. Grover, died September 8, 1979. Mrs. Grover had been a member since 1975 and was the holder of Bethel's Boston Post Cane.

Sidney W. Davidson, died October 27, 1979. Dr. Davidson was an honorary member, one of only three individuals who have achieved this status in the Society's history. Dr. Davidson was instrumental in the acquisition and restoration of the Moses Mason Museum as the headquarters of the Bethel Historical Society and its presentation to the Society from the William Bingham II Trust for Charity.

Join the Bethel Historical Society dedicated to preserving and interpreting the local past

Membership in the Society entitles you to:

- | | |
|--|---|
| (1) free admission to the museum | (4) special library and archival privileges |
| (2) special discounts at museum store | (5) semi-annual newsletter |
| (3) preferred rate for meeting room rental | (6) reduced course fees |

To the Membership Committee: I am interested in becoming a member of the Society.
(Please Print)

Name

Address

Signature

Please check appropriate category and send your remittance to: Box 12, Bethel, Maine 04217

.....Sustaining \$2.50 (Individual)

.....Contributing \$10.00

.....Patron \$25.00

.....Students (under 18 years) \$1.00

.....Life over 55 years \$50.00 single

.....Life over 55 years \$75.00 couple

.....Life under 55 years \$100.00 single

.....Life under 55 years \$150.00 couple

**PETITION OF INHABITANTS OF
SUDBERE CANADA TO THE GENERAL COURT
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Editor's Note: Nearly two hundred years ago, Bethel was subjected to what has been termed "New England's last Indian Raid." The citizens of this settlement then called Sudbury Canada petitioned the General Court to insure their future safety from the threat of Indians. The full text of that petition and those who signed is printed below. The original spelling has been retained.

"The humble petition of the subscribers Inhabitants of Sudbere Canada in the County of Cumberland & the Commonwealth of Massachusetts we renew our petitions humbly shewing for that whereas your petitioners have bin much distressed by the Injayns coming to the town last summer & killing & robing & leading off our nabors—which we have never heard of them since. We are much distressed in our minds fearing lest we should faull a pray into the hands of those saviges whose mercy is cruelty. We most humbly presume on your goodness being assured by sundry examples of your compassions that you will think of and pity the distressed therefore as an object truly deserving compassion we most humbly implore and petition this honored assembly to consider many difficulties we labor under and grant us a garde of about forty men to scout up and down Androscoggin river and elsewhere. It shall be thought most necessary. If we cannot have redress, we must leave our land on which we begin to raise our head corn and our families must suffer for lack of bread. It is an excellent track of land we are loth to leave it and that we may have redress is what we pray for therefore. The honored assemblies compliance will greatly oblige your humble servants and they as in duty found will ever pray

Eleaz" Twitchell, Eli Twitchell, David Marshall, Sam" Ingalls, Jonathan Bean, Jun", Josiah Bean, Daniel Bean, John York, Jonathan Clark, Jonathan Bean, Isaac Insley York, Benjamin Russell, James Swan, Jesse Duston

Sudbere Canada May ye 29 A. D. 1782"

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LIFE MEMBERS

BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(as of December 31, 1979)

Consuelo Alger, James D. Alger, Kimball Ames, Ruth Carver Ames, Clarence A. Bartlett, Mary S. Chadbourne, Philip H. Chadbourne, Howard Cole, Virginia Cole, Dr. Ruth Crosby, Donald B. Eddy, Edith Eaton Eddy, Gordon E. Gillies, Mary C. Gillies, Christine Grover, John E. Grover, John T. Grover, F. Edward Hanscom, Jr., Annie Hastings, E. Dick Hastings, Edward H. Hastings, Albert L. Johnson, Charlotte K. Johnson, Alice Keddy, Royden Keddy, Pearlina McMillin, Eva Mills, Edward M. Quinn, Marguerite Quinn, Josephine Setze, Dr. Charles Smith, Mary Anne Smith, Elisabeth Stedman, Robert Stedman, Corrine Twitchell, Nell Valentine.

"A good story is told about the enthusiasm which T. C. Chapman, the dry goods king of Milwaukee, infuses in his business transactions. Mr. Chapman has been the past week personally superintending extensive improvements on his farm in Gilead and Bethel, and at the suggestion of a neighbor decided to clear out stumps from a recently cleared piece of land by the use of dynamite, sending to Cape Elizabeth, Me. for an explosive to do the work. Mr. Chapman was so well pleased with the result that he decided to test the power of the explosive on a giant oak tree away back on the hillside and ordered seven cartridges placed under it and touched off. The result was wonderful; the tree was thrown high in the air and blown into a thousand pieces. One big limb came down through the roof of his elegant farm house, and he was so elated with the experiment that he sent the following telegram to Kendall and Whitney, Portland: 'Dynamite farming big success. Stumps and trees going heavenward. Send three more boxes.'"

"Oxford Advertiser," September 26, 1890

Bethel Historical Society
Box 12
Bethel, Maine 04217